

St Botolph's CofE Primary School

Rookery Avenue, Sleaford, NG34 7FE

Inspection dates 12–13 March 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Leadership and management		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Early years provision		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- Numerous staff changes since the previous inspection have hindered leaders' efforts to bring about sustained improvement in teaching and achievement. This is particularly the case in mathematics.
- Teaching has not been strong enough over time to ensure that all pupils make good progress in all subjects as they move through the school.
- Consequently, standards are lower than they should be, as pupils have struggled to catch up, despite the improvements in teaching introduced during this academic year.
- Pupils make slower progress in mathematics than in reading and writing. Attainment in mathematics at the end of Year 6 has been below average and too few pupils reach the higher levels.
- Pupils' behaviour and attitudes are not always as good as they should be. In a few lessons, their concentration falters when the work set does not immediately hold their attention.
- In some lessons, the work teachers set for the most and least able pupils does not always challenge them at the right level.
- Teachers are not always aware of the progress that different groups of pupils are making during lessons, and are not always aware when this slows.
- Teachers' marking does not always give pupils precise guidance on how to improve their work, extend their skills or deepen their understanding.
- Pupils do not always respond appropriately to marking and feedback.

The school has the following strengths

- The headteacher and senior leaders provide strong leadership. They have secured substantial improvements in teaching and learning, and show good capacity for further improvement.
- As a result of teaching that has been consistently good, children in the Reception classes make good progress.
- Pupils make good progress in writing and standards are above national expectations.
- The school provides a calm and nurturing environment in which pupils feel safe.
- Subject leaders' roles have developed quickly during this academic year and they are playing an effective role in securing improvements in teaching and learning.
- Governors have a thorough understanding of the school's work. They contribute well to its improvement.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 24 sessions of teaching and learning, including eight joint observations with the headteacher.
- Discussions were held with school staff, three governors and a representative from the local authority.
- The inspectors talked to pupils about the school's work and listened to some pupils in Years 1 and 2 read.
- Inspectors observed various aspects of the school's work and considered a range of policies and documents. These included information about pupils' attainment and progress, planning and monitoring documentation, the school improvement plan and self-evaluation summary, safeguarding policies, and behaviour and attendance records.
- Account was taken of 164 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View, and a letter from one parent. Inspectors also spoke to parents as they were dropping off their children at school, and met with a parent at her own request at another time.
- The questionnaire responses received from 39 staff were also considered.

Inspection team

Joan Beale, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Wayne Simner	Additional Inspector
Lucy Maughan	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- Children in the early years attend one of two Reception classes, on a full-time basis.
- Most pupils are from White British backgrounds.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils supported by the pupil premium is below average. This funding is for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and those looked after by the local authority.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is lower than average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- Since the last inspection there have been a number of changes in teaching staff, including in the leadership of mathematics, literacy and the early years. Five new members of staff started in September 2014.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching in order to accelerate pupils' progress and raise attainment, especially in mathematics, by making sure that all teachers:
 - set work that challenges pupils at the right level, so that they think and work hard in lessons
 - check carefully on the progress of all groups of pupils during lessons, so that teachers know if they understand their work and are working as hard as they are able to
 - make consistently clear what pupils need to do to extend their knowledge, deepen their understanding and improve their work in all subjects
 - check that pupils respond to marking comments and challenges they are set in lessons.
- Improve behaviour in lessons by:
 - ensuring all activities are sufficiently well planned to motivate pupils, hold their attention and require them to concentrate.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- Numerous changes in staffing since the previous inspection have slowed progress in improving teaching. However, the school is now in a more settled phase. Shared aspirations and good leadership at all levels are ensuring that the quality of teaching is improving rapidly. As a result pupils are making more consistent progress across the school. This is particularly the case in mathematics.
- Leaders' checks on the school's work are accurate. They have identified the main priorities for development and ensured that all staff understand them. For example, there is currently a whole-school focus on improving pupils' achievement in mathematics and appropriate changes have been made to the organisation of mathematics teaching, lesson planning and resources. As a result the gaps are narrowing between pupils' attainment and progress in mathematics and those in reading and writing.
- Subject leaders' roles have developed substantially since the start of this academic year. This has strengthened the school's capacity to sustain improvements considerably. Subject leaders for mathematics and literacy work alongside senior leaders to review pupils' achievement and to prioritise future developments. They regularly check pupils' progress by looking at their books and observing lessons. They discuss information about the progress of pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, with teachers. They know what needs to be done to secure further improvements and share senior leaders' high expectations.
- Subject leaders are working purposefully to implement the new curriculum. They support their colleagues' planning and check how well they are applying the new approaches. The leaders of literacy and mathematics, alongside senior leaders, are working well with the local authority to implement new methods of assessment following the discontinuation of National Curriculum levels.
- The curriculum provides rich and diverse experiences, which develop pupils' creative potential well. It is enhanced by a wide range of visits and visitors. For example, Year 6 recently visited a theme park and teachers planned interesting learning activities around this. The whole school recently enjoyed a visit from an author, which inspired their writing. Pupils benefit from the opportunity to attend a number of clubs for sports, writing, 'mathletics', homework, chess, film, drama, choir, recorder, cookery and scrabble.
- The impact of the curriculum is seen in many impressive displays of pupils' work in classrooms and corridors. The promotion of British values features strongly throughout the school. For example, pupils develop their understanding of the democratic process through elections for positions of responsibility.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral social and cultural development is promoted well. Pupils are quiet and respectful during acts of collective worship. They respond thoughtfully to questions such as 'how can I have a peaceful playtime' and regularly consider issues such as tolerance, respect, peace and friendship through termly themes. As a result they are well prepared for life in modern Britain. All staff are committed to the promotion of equality of opportunity, and discrimination of any kind is not tolerated.
- The additional funding received through the pupil premium is used effectively to provide additional staffing and resources to support the pupils for whom it is intended. As a result disadvantaged pupils are making better progress this year and catching up with their classmates.
- The school makes good use of the primary sports funding to enhance the skills of teachers and to broaden the range of sporting activities available. The work of specialist sports coaches from the local secondary school is enhancing the skills of teachers and broadening the range of sporting activities available. The school has received the gold award for sport from a national supermarket chain. The wide range of sports clubs on offer includes volleyball, netball, athletics, tag-rugby, cricket, cross country, drama, craft, girls' & boys' football, and table tennis. This is leading to an increase in pupils' participation in sport and helping them to develop healthy lifestyles.
- Recent support from the local authority has been helpful in improving the quality of teaching in mathematics. Regular visits from an education adviser have provided an objective evaluation of the school's performance.

■ The governance of the school:

- The school benefits from the support of an effective governing body. Governors are diligent in checking the quality of their own work and carry out their statutory duties effectively.
- Governors have a good understanding of how pupils' attainment and progress compare with the performance of other schools. They regularly review the schools' performance data.
- They conscientiously set and review the headteacher's targets for improving the school.
- The governing body knows how additional funds, such as the pupil premium, are used. Dedicated governors are responsible for each area of additional funding.
- Governors are well informed about the link between staff performance and salary progression, including awards for additional responsibilities. They ensure that pay awards are fair and consistent, and that any underperformance is tackled appropriately.
- A governor with responsibility for safeguarding completes regular reviews of arrangements and provides training for all staff. This helps to ensure that all requirements relating to child protection and safeguarding are met.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

requires improvement

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement. In some classes, when pupils are given tasks that do not interest them or are not challenging enough, their attention wanders and they lose concentration. When this is the case, they make slower progress.
- Around the school and in the playground pupils behave very well, showing pride in the school environment. They are polite and courteous to adults and each other. They confidently engaged with members of the inspection team.
- Pupils behave exceptionally well during acts of collective worship. They respond with interest and maturity to the school's themes, such as peace, and readily reflect on their meaning and relevance to their own lives.
- Pupils in Key Stages 1 and 2 benefit from separate play areas. Year 6 'play leaders' help to support and guide younger pupils. As a result play and lunchtimes are happy occasions, when pupils play well together and look out for each other.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. It uses very clear and secure procedures for staff recruitment. Relevant risk assessments ensure that the school site is safe and also that trips and visits are conducted safely. Staff receive regular and relevant training for all aspects of safeguarding. Any staff who are new to the school receive appropriate training.
- Pupils say that they feel safe and know who to go to if they have any concerns. They have a good awareness of how to keep safe on the internet.
- Pupils understand what bullying is and say that it rarely happens. This view is supported by school records, which show that any such incidents are very infrequent and dealt with promptly by leaders.
- Pupils' enjoyment of school and sense of security are reflected in their above-average attendance. Parents are highly supportive. One commented, 'I cannot speak highly enough of the school.'

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Teaching requires improvement because there have been too many differences in the quality of teaching over time to enable pupils to make consistently good progress in all subjects. A large number of staff changes since the previous inspection have slowed improvements in teaching, especially the teaching of

mathematics.

- In a few lessons activities are not well matched to the different abilities of pupils. This means that some pupils find the work too difficult and others complete tasks very quickly when they could tackle more demanding work. In some lessons teachers are not aware of the progress of all groups of pupils within their class and so do not identify quickly enough if pupils have not understood a task or their progress is slowing. When this happens, pupils do not work at the right level to secure faster rates of progress, particularly pupils capable of reaching higher levels.
- Teachers regularly mark work and highlight what pupils have done well and where they have made mistakes. However, although there are examples of helpful marking and feedback to pupils when teachers fully implement the school's marking policy, this is not always the case across the school. This means that not all pupils receive clear feedback on exactly how to improve their work. Even when helpful advice is given, teachers do not always make sure that pupils respond to marking comments and challenges.
- The effective teaching of phonics (letters and the sounds they make) leads to above-average performance in the Year 1 phonics check. This lays the basis for pupils' development as confident readers as they move through the school.
- Good teaching of writing enables pupils to make good progress and reach above-average levels of attainment. This is because teachers plan interesting and enjoyable activities for pupils to write about. For example, pupils in Year 2 enjoyed writing about the Fire of London.
- Teaching assistants make a valuable contribution to pupils' learning. They are usually well briefed and know what is expected of them. As a result the groups and individual pupils that they support, including disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, make good progress. Teaching assistants also contribute well to the teaching of phonics.
- Teachers regularly assess and review pupils' learning with leaders, including the progress made by disadvantaged pupils. This is helping them to make rapid changes in response to pupils' needs and so quicken their progress.
- The teaching of mathematics has improved since the start of this academic year. Following staff training, the way that mathematics is taught has been reorganised. Teachers plan lessons which engage and interest pupils and build firmly on what they already know. Pupils have access to a range of interesting resources to help them in their mathematical learning. As a result pupils are making better progress in mathematics.
- Classrooms are bright and colourful and include celebrations of pupils' work and also resources to support their learning.

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Although progress is now improving, over time, pupils have not made sufficiently rapid and sustained progress in all subjects across the school, and particularly in mathematics. As a result, although teaching and progress have improved this year, standards in Year 6 are not yet as high as they should be.
- Past variations in the quality of teaching have meant that pupils' achievement varies between classes and subjects. In 2014 pupils reached above-average standards in writing. Standards in reading were slightly below average and in mathematics they were significantly below average. Not enough pupils reached the higher levels in mathematics.
- In 2014, the proportion of pupils making expected progress in reading was close to the national average but the proportion exceeding expected progress was below average. The proportions making expected and better progress in writing were above average. In mathematics, with the proportions of pupils making and exceeding expected progress were below average.

- The attainment of disadvantaged pupils in Year 6 in 2014 was more than four terms behind that of their peers in school in reading, writing and mathematics. It was only two terms behind other pupils nationally in writing, but six terms behind in reading and seven terms behind in mathematics. Their attainment on entry to Key Stage 2 was lower than that of other pupils in the school, but nevertheless, like other pupils, their progress required improvement. This year they are making much better progress and the gaps are closing in all subjects.
- The progress of the most-able pupils requires improvement. In 2014, though most pupils who were at Level 3 in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Year 2 reached the expected Level 5, a few did not in reading and mathematics. A high proportion reached Level 6 in writing, but the proportion reaching level 6 in mathematics was lower than the proportion nationally.
- Weaknesses in the organisation and teaching of mathematics in the past have hindered pupils' progress. With better teaching, achievement is improving but still not good. A successful focus on the teaching of mathematics is accelerating pupils' progress substantially in this subject. School data and work in pupils' books confirm the school's view that pupils currently in Year 6 have made good progress since September in all subjects, including mathematics, because of the much improved teaching and support they are receiving.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs receive appropriately targeted support from teachers and teaching assistants, both in lessons and in individual and small-group sessions. As a result they too are doing well this year, but overall their progress has been in line with that of other groups of pupils.

The early years provision

is good

- Most children join the Reception class with skills that are typical for their age, although a minority in each year enter with more limited skills. The staff use assessment information effectively to plan activities that extend children's learning experiences. Combined with teaching that has been consistently good for some time, enables all pupils, including those who are disabled or have special educational needs and the most able, to make consistently good progress in all the areas of learning. Teaching prepares children well for Year 1.
- The proportion of children leaving Reception with a good level of development was in line with that seen nationally in both 2013 and 2014. School data and the work that children are doing show that a higher proportion of children are on track to reach a good level of development in 2015.
- Children settle quickly into the Reception class and behave well because the staff make sure they know a lot about the children by meeting with them and their parents before they start school. Parents are encouraged to share with staff any information about their children's activities, interests and learning at home. Staff keep parents well informed about the progress their children are making. As a result, parents are happy that their children are achieving well in a safe and caring environment.
- The leadership and management of the early years setting is good. Stimulating indoor and outdoor environments provide children with interesting activities throughout the day and support their learning in all areas well. This is helping to develop children's physical development and emotional well-being. During the inspection, children enjoyed developing their imaginative play in the 'Opticians' area, where they tested each other's eyes.
- Phonics skills are taught well in the Reception class. Staff have good knowledge of the sounds that letters make and convey this to children very effectively. They use a range of colourful and interesting resources to support their teaching. This contributes well to the development of children's early reading skills.

What inspection judgements mean

School	Grade	Judgement	Description
	Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
	Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
	Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
	Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	132251
Local authority	Lincolnshire
Inspection number	456014

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	394
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mark Graves
Headteacher	Debbie Wilson
Date of previous school inspection	11 July 2012
Telephone number	01529 302698
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Email address	Debbie.wilson@stbotolphs.co.uk

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